

*O. parvulus*, can be considered as varieties of one species, then the experience of all the best ornithologists must be given up, and whole genera must be blended into one species. I cannot myself doubt that *M. trifasciatus*, and *M. parvulus* are as distinct species as any that can be named in one restricted genus.

The habits of these three species are similar, and they evidently replace each other in the natural economy of the different islands; nor can I point out any difference between their habits and those of *M. Thenca* of Chile; I imagined, however, that the tone of their voice was slightly different. They are lively, inquisitive, active birds, and run fast; (I cannot assert, positively, that *M. Thenca runs*). They are so extremely tame, a character in common with the other birds of this Archipelago, that one alighted on a cup of water which I held in my hand, and drank out of it. They sing pleasantly; their nest is said to be simple and open. They seem to prefer the dry sterile regions nearer the coast, but they are likewise found in the higher, damper and more fertile parts of the islands. To these latter situations, however, they seem chiefly attracted by the houses and cleared ground of the colonists. I repeatedly saw the *M. melanotis* at James Island, tearing bits of meat from the flesh of the tortoise, which was cut into strips and suspended to dry, precisely in the same manner as I have so often observed the *M. Orpheus*, in La Plata, attacking the meat hung up near the Estancias.

#### 1. FURNARIUS RUFUS. Vieill.

*Furnarius rufus*, Vieill., Ency. Meth. 513.

*Merops rufus*, Gmel. Pl. enl. 739.

*Opetiorhynchus rufus*, Tem. Man.

*Turdus vadius*, Licht. Cat.

*Figulus albogularis*, Spix. Av. pl. lxxviii. f. 1 & 2.

Fournier, Buff., Azara, No. 221.

This bird is common in Banda Oriental, on the banks of the Plata; but I did not see it further southward. It is called by the Spaniards Casaro, or house-builder, from the very singular nest which it constructs. The most exposed situation, as on the top of a post, the stem of an opuntia, or bare rock, is chosen. The nest consists of mud and bits of straw; it is very strong, and the sides are thick; in shape it resembles a depressed beehive or oven, and hence the name of the genus. Directly in front of the mouth of the nest, which is large and arched, there is a partition, which reaches nearly to the roof, thus forming a passage or ante-chamber to the true nest. At Maldonado, in the end of May, the bird was busy in building. The *Furnarius* is very common in Banda Oriental; it often haunts the bushes in the neighbourhood of houses; it is an active bird, and both walks and runs quickly, and generally by starts; it feeds chiefly on Coleoptera; it often utters a peculiar, loud, shrill, and quickly reiterated cry.

#### 2. FURNARIUS CUNICULARIUS. G. R. Gray.

*Alauda cunicularia*, Vieill.

*Alauda fissirostra*, Kittl. Mem. l'Acad. St. Peters. ii. pl. 3.

*Certhilauda cunicularia*, D'Orb. & Lafr. Mag. de Zool.

This bird has a considerable geographical range. On the eastern side of the continent it is found from about 40° (for I never saw one in the southern districts of Patagonia) northward to at least 30°, and perhaps much further. On the western side its southern limit is the neighbourhood of Concepcion, where the country becomes dry and open, and it ranges throughout Chile (specimens were procured from Valparaiso) to at least as far north as Lima, in lat. 12°, on the coast of Peru. I may here observe, that the northern limit of all birds, which are lovers of dry countries, such as this *Furnarius* and some of the species of *Mimus*, is not probably at Lima but near Cape Blanco, 10° south of the Equator, where the open and parched land of Peru blends (as it was described to me) rather suddenly into the magnificent forests of Guayaquil. This *Furnarius* constantly haunts the driest and most open districts; and hence sand-dunes near the coast afford it a favourite resort. In La Plata, in Northern Patagonia, and in Central Chile, it is abundant: in the former country it is called Casarita, a name which has evidently been given from its relationship with the Casaro, or *Furnarius rufus*, for, as we shall see, its nidification is very different. It is a very tame, most quiet, solitary little bird, and like the English robin (*Sylvia rubecula*) it is usually most active early in the morning and late in the evening. When disturbed it flies only to a short distance; it is fond of dusting itself on the roads; it walks and runs (but not very quickly), and generally by starts. I opened the stomachs of some, and found in them remains of Coleoptera, and chiefly Carabidæ. At certain seasons it frequently utters a peculiar, shrill but gentle, reiterated cry, which is so quickly repeated as to produce one running sound. In this respect, and in its manner of walking on the ground, and in its food, this species closely resembles the Casaro, but in its quiet manners it differs widely from that active bird. Its nidification is likewise different, for it builds its nest at the bottom of a narrow cylindrical hole, which is said to extend horizontally to nearly six feet under ground. Several of the country people told me, that when boys, they had attempted to dig out the nest, but had scarcely ever succeeded in getting to the end. The bird chooses any low bank of firm sandy soil by the side of a road or stream. At the settlement of Bahia Blanca the walls are built of hardened mud; and I noticed one, enclosing a courtyard, where I lodged, which was penetrated by round holes in a score of places. On asking the owner the cause of this, he bitterly complained of the little Casarita, several